

Democracy in Pakistan:

Hopes and hurdles.

Outline:-

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 - weak parliament
 - ~~Biased Accountability.~~
 - iii) Demographic hurdles in democracy
 - Illiterate population
 - Gender biased political system
 - Polarized political system.

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4) Hopes for the democracy in Pakistan.

- Case study of Arab springs. (There may be hurdles to in achieving democracy but it is not impossible to achieve)
- Improving civil military relations.
- 18th amendment to power, empowered democracy in Pakistan.

~~Reduction of security~~

- Improving security situation.
- Increase in protest as a sign of democracy at work.

5) Conclusion.

Essay.

"Democracy is the worst form of government except for all others that have been tried"

- Winston Churchill.

The quote emphasises that, ~~UK a~~ ~~long~~ ~~standing~~ while democracy has flaws, it is preferable over other forms of governments. UK a long standing democracy ^{initially} faced many problems like political scandals and debates over monarchs. Yet, its democracy still remained enacted. ~~Pakistan, being an colony of UK, adopted the same democratic system.~~ As former colony of UK, Pakistan adopted the same democratic system. But, in contrast, Pakistan's ^{the} democratic structure could not flourish as it should be. Since 1947, Pakistan has been facing with many hurdles to fully implementing democracy in country. Factors like immature leadership, military's intervention in politics, biased institutions and demographic hurdles are blocking its way to become a pure democratic country. However, the current democratic ^{it was} situation is somehow better than in the 1900s, and there are hopes for democracy to evolve in Pakistan.

Since 1947, Pakistan has been suffering from the problem of unstable democratic government. No P.M. has ever completed his tenure of 5 years in the office. Owing to military leadership and political leadership. interference. Nehru once said, "Pakistan" I don't change clothes in one day ^{as} more often as Pakistan Prime Minister is changed" in Pakistan". Starting from Liaqat Ali Khan upto Imran Khan every P. Prime Minister was either removed by civilian leader or by military leadership. ~~Thus~~ Some were even killed or assassinated or hanged. Thus, such measures have weakened Pakistan's democracy so much that people ^{are} now apathetic towards politics.

Also, weak democratic structure created a tussle of power between East and West Pakistan. East Pakistan's population was 54% of the total population of Pakistan but ~~many~~ most of the officers were from West Pakistan. ~~Thus~~ These officers were not ready to follow the basic rule of democracy that is: "majority ^{has} have the authority". Consequently, in 1971, when Sheikh Mujib got the majority and state refused to accept his ^{victory} win in the election, it led to the creation

of a new country. The partition shows how weak ~~was~~
the democracy ^{was} in Pakistan.

If, ~~we~~ ^{one} look at our counterpart, India, which got independence with Pakistan, ~~was~~ ^{but} its democratic institutions was more resilient against the problems. India faced many problems like religious and cultural diversity, poverty and corruption but hurdles through ~~which~~ ^{that} Pakistan was facing were different and more intense. Such hurdles still exist, and either they have become more intense or new ones have been added.

In contrast to India, ^{after} since Pakistan's inception, two ^{of its} founding political leaders, ~~were~~ ^{with} Quaid-e-Azam and Liaqat Ali Khan, were either killed or assassinated. ^{As a result,} ~~Due to~~ ^{to} this, there was a lack of political leadership that ~~could~~ ^{could} guide the parties ^{towards} to become politically maturity. The most important job of political parties is to unite the people. However, political parties in Pakistan were involved in regional politics, ~~as a result~~ ^{As a result,} now Pakistan has more than 165+ registered political parties, and ~~they are~~ ^{often} many of which are termed as pressure groups. Pressure groups play a key role in helping a political party form a government at centre by offering their limited seats.

However, it is evident from the past, they ^{have been} ~~were~~ used by the military establishment to remove a political party from the power. Although, if a political party still manages to retain itself in power, no matter for how many years, ^{it} they consider parliamentary debates futile. A recent example of it. As recently, National assembly passed 9.11 trillion dollar in expenditure overruns without after the budget has ^{been approved} passed, without a debate in parliament. Such such measures ~~are~~ have been routinely approved by the parliament. ~~Thus~~ Consequently, such measures show that decisions are made outside ~~of~~ the hallowed halls of parliament.

Moreover, there is a problem ^{with} in the origin of the political leaders in the political parties. Since British rule, when ^{for the first time} political representation was given to the Indians through legislative Councils in 1862, most of those representatives ~~were~~ ^{came} from feudal background. And, ^{To this day,} ~~uptill now~~ majority of the political parliamentarians are ^{continue to come} [↑] from feudal background. Since, they are influenced by the colonial era's politicians, they are autocratic in nature. They do not tolerate even a healthy competition in their constituency and use autocratic methods to sideline their competitors. Such political

leaders are undermining democratic system in Pakistan, and most of their decisions policies are for ^{their own benefits} themselves rather for the good of ^{the} public. For instance, in the in-the budget, passed for FY 2021-2025, majority of taxes were ^{imposed} implemented on salaried class and registered businesses. However, no significant steps have been taken to bring agricultural income in to tax net. Agricultural ~~continue~~ contributes only 0.1% in direct tax collection and highest ~~stab~~ ^{rate} on agricultural income tax ~~is~~ 15pc in Punjab and Sindh. However, ^{for} on salaried individuals the ^{tax rate} figures jumps ^{to} upto 39%. Public ^{has} have been seen these ^{come} ~~are~~ startling figures because most of the parliamentarians ^{are} from feudal background and they ^{seek} ~~want~~ to ^{avoid} ~~evade~~ the ^{paying} ~~from~~ taxes.

Besides political leadership, military leadership has also played its role to undermine democracy in Pakistan. Military had directly ruled Pakistan for approximately 23 years. To this day, many opposition parties allege military for ~~its~~ intervention in politics. Since Pakistan was newly formed democratic country, such interventions ^{prevented} ~~did not let~~ ^{its} Pakistan's democracy from ^{becoming} ~~to~~ become politically mature. ^{Although} ~~However~~, direct interventions from the military ^{have} ~~had~~ ^{ceased} ~~stopped~~ but still ~~there is~~

their influence intervention in politics is ~~obvious~~ remains evident to this day.

Other hurdles, ^{that} which are as ~~is~~ ^{obstacle} as obstacle for in Pakistan's journey towards ^{becoming an} fully exemplary democratic state ^{include} weak institutions, ^{and} the most concerning ^{being} ^{the} ^{is} Judiciary of Pakistan. Unfortunately, judiciary in Pakistan ^{has often} ^{operated} ^{under} ~~works~~ with doctrine of necessity. Judiciary, being the most important organ of a democratic country, has ~~had~~ legitimized martial laws that undermined democracy in Pakistan.

It Judiciary legitimized ~~Musharraf's~~ all the martial laws in history, and ~~at reason for legitimization~~ was justifying this by invoking the doctrine of necessity. However, invoking doctrine of necessity is not ^{just} a principle used in past. Recently, Supreme Court ~~has~~ ^{ruled} ~~passed~~ a ruling that it had misinterpreted the law by taking back the 'bat' symbol before election 2024. ^{Unfortunately,} ~~Consequently,~~ ^{However,} new ruling came ^{too} late, which kept ~~one of the largest~~ party of country out of the elections, resulting in one of the country's largest party being excluded from the elections.

~~In addition to judiciary another state organ that is in bad conditions is the parliament.~~ ^{democratic}

In addition to the judiciary, parliament is another state organ that is ~~currently~~ ^{currently} in a deteriorated condition. Parliamentary debates, which is essential for the law making and policy making, often ends up into chaos. ~~Resulting in~~ ^{This frequently results} no fruitful discussion between opposition and government. ~~Parliament, which is the representation of people in~~ Parliament, which is the true representatos of people, seems to be sitting on the sidelines, when it comes to law making and amendments. in constitution. For instance, Preceding regime of PTI has ~~passed~~ ^{enacted} almost 15 ordinances while bypassing the parliament. Moreover, two amendments were ~~passed~~ ^{made} to ^{the} "Rule of Procedure and Conduct of Business Act" in 2013 and 2016. The amendments were ~~about~~ ^{stipulated} ~~address~~ that, standing committees of parliament ~~will~~ ^{would} send recommendations to the concerned ministries for public sector development programmes. However, no recommendation have been accepted uptill now. This shows, how weak a role of parliament is in the governmental affairs.

Apart from weak institutions, demographic issues such as illiterate population is also a problem for Pakistan's democracy. Sir Iskandar Mirza, the former President of Pakistan said: - "With 15% literacy how will you develop your democratic model?" Population is like a ~~two~~^{double-} edged sword. If it is ~~literate~~^{literate} it could become a great human resource; ~~but~~^{however,} an illiterate population ^{can be} is a burden for a country. Illiterate According to a recent census, current literacy rate of Pakistan is 62.3% which means that 60 million people are illiterate. Also, definition of a literate person in Pakistan is minimum primary education. Illiterate population has minimum understanding about the issues of the government. Moreover, they can be easily exploited, and are susceptible to misinformation. Consequently ~~potential~~ leaders. A ^{majority} of the population do not have the basic information about how democracy works. They mostly cast vote on the basis of caste and ethnicity. Thus, it is ^{imperative} inevitable to have a high illiteracy rate in order to implement a true democratic structure in Pakistan.

50%

~~Pakistan has a gender biased political system~~

~~Almost 50% of Pakis~~

Almost 50% of Pakistan's population consists of women; however, they do not have an active role in Pakistan's politics because of its gender-biased political system. If a woman wants to step out of her house to participate in politics, she has to face vulnerabilities of the society. Although women have reserved seats in the parliament, but they do not play an effective role in democratic process. Furthermore, even some clerics also do not appreciate participation of ^{the} women in politics. Thus, a large chunk of ~~total~~ population ~~have been~~ ^{is} kept out of politics in Pakistan.

~~Further~~ Furthermore, Pakistan's political system is polarized. Political parties are more concerned about the areas with dense population. Rising tensions between Balochistan and centre, and KPK and centre is further deepening the polarisation. Balochistan is suffering with populace is suffering with missing person's issue, but their political leaders have turned a deaf ear to their concerns. Similarly in KPK there is a rise of insurgency; however state ha

no other solution ^{then} rather a military operation, that will displace thousands of people from their residency. Due to such measures, people are loosing trust in democracy. Consequently, they are ~~personally~~ aligning themselves with anti state groups for their protection.

~~In 2010s during the Arab spring..~~

In 2010s, when during the Arab spring, when Arab world had witnessed a series of anti government ^{protest} ~~protest~~, some countries like Tunisia successfully transitioned into democratic country. While some ^{others,} ~~countries~~ like Syria fell into conflict or retained to authoritarian rule. This highlights that a complex and often perilous path to achieving and maintaining democracy. Similarly, Pakistan's democracy is currently facing many difficulties but ~~at~~ there are hopes that it may evolve.

Civil military relations ^{in the country.} have been seen improving. ~~in the country.~~ Pakistan ^{has} ~~have~~ not ^{experienced} ~~seen~~ martial law since 2008. Also, 1973 constitution is still enacted. ~~However~~ ~~so~~ If such situation persists in future, democracy will further deepen its roots in the country.

Furthermore, 18th ammendment was a ~~crucial~~ important step to strengthen & strengthen democracy in Pakistan. The ammendment stipulated that no one can either abrogate or suspend law, and also declared such step as high treason. Also, there it put a bar on court to legitimize extra-constitutional adventures. Furthermore, presidential power to dissolve the National Assembly was revoked. Such ammendments has played a vital role to stop anyone to abrogate the constitution. Additionally, ~~is~~ through 18th amendment established a restriction on repeated reliance on ordinance, ~~thus~~ giving more ~~the~~ by granting more power to the parliament.

Pakistan's ^{achieving} deterrence After Pakistan has achieved nuclear technology, ~~deterrence~~ in the region has increased. Since 1971, Pakistan ^{has} not engaged in a full scale war with India. Its ^{has been} ~~border situation~~ is. There is a stability on its border regions from ^{the} ~~over~~ past ^{two} decades. Afghanistan Consequently, the stability ^{strengthening} will help Pakistan to shift its focus towards [↑] democracy and ^{improving} [↑] economic situation rather ^{than.} spending to spend billions on military ~~or~~ for the war.

With ongoing stable ~~st~~ situation on the borders, people of Pakistan finally ^{have} got some time to ^{focus on} ~~think~~ about the ^{country's} internal problems of Pakistan. The Protest in Balochistan and in KPK are good indicators ^{that} people are demanding their rights from the state. It means that people have learned to demand their rights through democratic ~~st~~ ^{means} rather than aligning themselves with terrorist groups. Recently, the huge protest ~~which~~ ^{that} took place at Gwadar, under the leadership of new political leader, Mahrang Baloch, ^{demonstrates} ~~shows~~ Pakistan that people of Balochistan are now ^{asserting} ~~demanding~~ their rights through peaceful protest. US United States' former president Barack Obama ~~while~~ highlighting the importance of protest said: - "To those who have chosen to protest peacefully, I want you to know that you matter. I want you to know that your lives matter, that your dreams matter. And when I see young people like the ones here tonight, I know that our future is in good hands"

In conclusion, it is obvious that Pakistan's democracy has faced many problems from beginning. ~~Its~~ ~~its~~ In contrast to India the institutions of Pakistan were very weak ^{they} that ^{they} could strengthen

the democracy in the country. Even there was problem with the ~~the~~ ^{within people} as well. Illiterate population and gender discrimination were at its peak. but however, with time being situation of Pakistan's democracy has become better. Due to constitutional reforms and improving civil military relations. Additionally, emergence of new political leaders and improving security situations all are good indicators that Pakistan democracy is on forward track.